1: Métraux E-4 (no date) 1946 SM3 Caingang SM3

of which have been revealed to him by some spirit. A certain grass, said to be the favorite food of tapirs, is endowed with great medicinal virtues. It is used not only to cure but also to prevent sickness (Henry, 1941, p. 88). Massages play a great part in therapeutics. Sometimes these are so violent that the practitioner steps on the patient's stomach. The skin is frequently rubbed with pulverized barks or plants before the treatment. Burning herbs are used therapeutically, particularly for wounds. A patient bitten by a snake is laid upon a slanting platform over a fire and given warm water to drink to make him vomit. Manizer (1930, p. 784) was impressed by the number of people whose heads, arms, or legs were swathed in *Philodendron* for therapeutic purposes. To lessen fatigue on a long walk, the Indians bandage their legs up to the hip with tight braids. (On *Caingang* medicine, see Paulá Souza, 1918, pp. 750–753.)

Bloodletting, which is practiced with a flint flake or a piece of glass, is a common cure for many ailments. Like many Indians, the *Caingang* treat fever with cold baths. Breathing on the affected spot is a common means of assisting a suffering person. Wounds are sprinkled with pulverized jaborandy powder.

When illness is caused by the loss of the soul, the patient may recover if appropriate words are spoken to induce the soul to return. It is often promised food. If the shaman's diagnosis reveals that the disease has been brought about by invisible missiles shot by a spirit, the cure consists of extracting them with the mouth. This procedure, however, was observed only among the *Aweikoma-Caingang* of Santa Catarina.

Magic practices.—To drive clouds away, old women blow against the right hand and then wave it toward the clouds, spreading the fingers as if to disseminate their breath. When the *Aweikoma-Caingang* desire rain, they put their mouths to the water and blow. They take some in their hands and cry, as they throw it upward, "Look here! Do like this." (Henry, 1941, p. 94.) Ashes thrown into a river are expected to stop its rise.

Divining.—According to Lozano (1873, 1:427), *Guayaná* shamans drank maté in order to consult spirits. Answering questions put to them by their clients, the shamans always said, "The grass [maté] told me this or that." Among modern *Aweikoma*, a man may be requested to drink maté and to belch while he is asked questions. A strong belch is interpreted as "No" and a weak one as "Yes" (Henry, 1941, p. 88).

In order to know which animals will be killed and where they will be found, the *Aweikoma-Caingang* set fire to a heap of pine-wood charcoal. The size of the spark corresponds to an animal species and the place where it twinkles indicates where the game will be slain.

2: Henry E-5 (1932-1934) 1941
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imagine it is going to crash solidly on your head, these subterranean streams cast great sections of the earth into the rivers. Then streams that were sluggish and clear become turgid and rushing. Rivers that moved slowly and whose bottoms you could easily see through their few feet of clear water rise almost four feet overnight, and their purling shallows become dangerous rapids, pouring tons of muddy red water down toward the sea. Then all day long the shouts of the Indians—"Storm, go away, I am afraid of you; so stop!"—go up among the camps, rising faintly above the roar of the river, the rush of the rain, and the ceaseless rumble of the thunder.

Water is everywhere in Santa Catarina, and it literally grows on trees, or at least in bamboo, the hollow stems of which are filled with it. You cannot walk far without coming across at least a brook, and the Indians use the streams as short cuts, sometimes walking in the water for half a mile. In nine days a pair of rubber-soled tennis shoes rotted off my feet; by the end of my five-weeks' hunting trip the seams of my waterproof leather boots had rotted. Yet in this land where a hundred thousand terraces bear witness to ages of slow erosion and the winding streams interlace like silver bands, the Kaingáng are without boats or rafts. They have every other technique for crossing a stream that ingenuity and resourcefulness might suggest: they knock down a tree on one side of a stream so that it will fall on the other and form a bridge, and they also build crude bridges. Men who have supernatural power obtained from some water animal may even brave a turbulent stream to carry a line across so that other people may pull themselves across on it. But before they came to Duque de Caxias the Kaingáng knew nothing of navigation, and the one instance in folklore of an attempt at it ended in a fiasco. Of course the Kaingáng were land nomads. It would have been too much work to build a canoe or even a raft just to cross a stream and it was much easier for them to wait until the river went down; for the Kaingáng never felt a pressing need to be anywhere at any particular time. They might just as well have been on one side of the river as on the other.

To know how to walk in the bed of a stream, stepping unerringly from stone to slippery stone, is really a blessing, for a smarting body appreciates the respite from thorns, and the coldness of the water is soothing to one's battered and aching shins. The forest is no place for a pleasant stroll. The gait of the forest rover is unmistakable, for he never just steps; he *places his feet*. Where a thorn may prick, a vine slash, a fallen log batter; where the earth may crumble underfoot or a snake strike from the concealment of a pile of leaves or a low bush overhanging the trail, every move must be a maneuver. When an Indian is scratched or bruised, he stops and removes the cause so that those who follow will not suffer as he did. He gropes for the thorn until he finds it and then carries it far away to dispose

2: Henry E-5 (1932-1934) 1941
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of it, or he carefully chops out the root or log until the path is clear; he never leaves a rough edge.

The forest has certain little peculiarities whose marks the Indians recognize when they see one of their number come back from the hunt with a bloody eye or a mass of little cuts on his legs. There is a kind of bamboo that the Indians call *kotkólo* which hangs like a vine from trees and whose mark on the human body is so specific that the Indians can always tell when one of them has fallen foul of it. *Kotkólo* has a surface like sandpaper and a long thorn that curves slightly upward like a tiny scimitar. If you escape the thorn the surface may rasp across your face and leave a stinging welt. There is also a tall strong grass that grows in the open places the Indians love so well and that cuts like a knife. No one dares just walk through it; the feet must swing out like scythes to beat it down.

The Indians are acutely aware of their mountain forests as something with which they have to struggle and which is full of pain for them. The forest is a mass of vines and thorns that cut and trip; it is alive with insects that suck and torment; and they make no bones about saying so. They divide the forest into "clean places," those in which there are no vines, thorns, or bamboo,—they also call them "pretty places"—and "dirty places," where the tangle is so thick that it obscures the light of day.

In the winter these mountain forests are cold and nights are gray with the mist that rises from the watercourses. The temperature often drops below freezing at night, and not even the thickest clothing will keep out the cold and damp. Yet for generations the only clothing the Indians had was a knee-length netlike robe of plant fiber, worn about the waist by the women, and a closely woven shirt of the same material, reaching to the hips, worn by the men in the winter. When they began to raid the Brazilians they stole vests and blankets and it was common to see an Indian naked except for a little belt around his waist to tie up his penis—and a vest. The vest kept the torso warm while it allowed freedom of motion to the arms. The Kaingáng never do anything more with an animal skin than make soup of it, and before they had blankets and vests they simply spread a few fern fronds on the ground at night and lay down on them to sleep, pulling a net-like robe over themselves if they were so fortunate as to possess one.

On winter nights they are miserable and often get up to warm themselves by the fire. One morning in May as I warmed my aching joints by the fire and watched my breath spiral upward, Chukembégn said to me: "Last night I slept all over the place. It was so cold nobody slept." Sometimes they fall asleep sitting by the fire, their arms on their drawn-up knees, their heads sunk forward. The scarcity of blankets brings the young men together in the sleeping parties they love, when a half dozen of them,

II

Nomadic Life

484 512 THE KAINGÁNG USED TO WANDER about in the forest in small bands searching for food. Even now when they go hunting they rarely stay even a week in one place. They fall asleep without plans for the morrow, and they awaken in the morning without any idea of what they are to do. A few words over the morning fire may decide them to move on, and in ten minutes their possessions will be packed into baskets. The father strides off carrying his weapons in his hands: the indispensable axe and a gun or a massive seven-foot bow and a dozen arrows, while the mother comes plodding behind with the basket full of household possessions and the remaining food, if they are lucky enough to have any, the baby perched atop the load and the brother or sister holding on to her left hand, the right bearing a smoking firebrand for use at the next camp.

342 The Kaingáng hate to build the frail little shelters they call houses, and they never do so until the rain is on them. I always had to argue with the Indians to help put up my tent. When the clouds piled up in the sky, the air grew sultry, and the sun changed from yellow to dull red, I would say to Chukembégn, "It looks like rain." With a deprecatory glance at the sky he would reply: "No, it's not going to rain—not today. Tomorrow maybe, but today, no." "But look at those clouds." "That's nothing; it will pass." "Yes, the way it passed yesterday. Let's get the tent up, Chukembégn." At last the tent would be put up, sometimes as the first drops fell or in a pouring rain. It was not laziness that made them so slow to put up my tent, for they too could always take advantage of it; but housebuilding is simply an annoyance, and they never raise a shelter even for themselves unless they are forced to. It rains several times a day at the new moon in fall and winter, but though they know this perfectly well, they will not build a